"OBIA COMES!"

feared by all who themselves do not have Kromanti. Obia Kromanti warns and protects and heals, but its powers are only for those who belong to the Kromanti group.

Whether Kromanti is the African warrior society preserved in the bush, it is impossible to say. If this were the case, then the definite military organization of many of the West African societies should be present. The military character of any group among the Bush Negroes could not even be hinted at, of course, without the greatest caution. In their descriptions of the Kromanti, our informants among the Bush Negroes never indicated in any way the existence of such an organization. Even leading questions brought out only unqualified denials instead of the revealing answers "I do not know," or "Masra Gadu sabi." Yet there are undoubtedly secrets which Kromanti men do not share with outsiders, and we remembered that when a Kromanti man dies, he must be "separated" from the Kromanti group just as he is "separated" from his family and from his village.

About the very meaning of the word Kromanti there can only be speculation. During the time of the slave trade, there were two ports on the Gold Coast of Africa known as Little and Great Coromantyne. From these ports came the slaves who, in the New World, were known as Coromantyne slaves. These slaves were so warlike, so prone to cause uprisings, that only English and Dutch colonies consented to buy them and in these colonies when slave rebellions broke out to alarm the white planters, they were led by the proud Coromantyne slaves.

It would not be strange, therefore, if the same term was carried over into the free civilization of this bush to typify the obia which protected and watched over the fighters who had won this freedom.

Other indications point to the same assumption. The strongest spirits of the Kromanti, those which inspire the greatest fear when they possess men of a village are Tigri and Djadja. Tigri is the jaguar, Djadja is often vaguely translated by our word "devil." If we again turn to the West African societies, we find that one of the most dreaded

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carvings. Still another magic device is a red necklace of macaw feathers, to bring luck in hunting. Another obeiah with a tinkling bell is worn around the neck by pregnant women to tell the unborn child that everything is auspicious in the outside world.

Some of the beliefs accompanying these amulets are odd and child-like. The Djukas think that spirits are afraid of strangers, and flee in terror when a stranger is encountered. The inhabitants of the little town of *Prikrin Sey* (Talk a Little Bit) have the power to call back hunters who are lost in the bush, a virtue peculiar to these townfolk alone. These curious beliefs persist despite the fact that they could easily be tested and exposed. Any coincidence will strongly reinforce them. Late one evening, going up the river, we came to an Aucaner village and stopped to spend the night. Not liking the looks of the place we told our paddlers to push on to the next village before night. Tired, they grumbled at this. To give weight to our decision we told the blacks that our obeiahs were warning us not to stay, and that it would be dangerous to let this warning pass unheeded. Impressed with the gravity of the warning, they acceded to our wishes. We went on, although not being able to reach the adjacent village in time we were forced to spend the night in the bush. §

Later, coming back down the river, we learned that the village we had passed by had held, on that very night, a great and disastrous dance. There had been much drinking of high wine, and, in the drunken and hysterical excitement that followed, half the town was burned down and three men were killed.